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9 March 1966

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
RELATING TO NATIONAL SECURITY

State Dept. review completed

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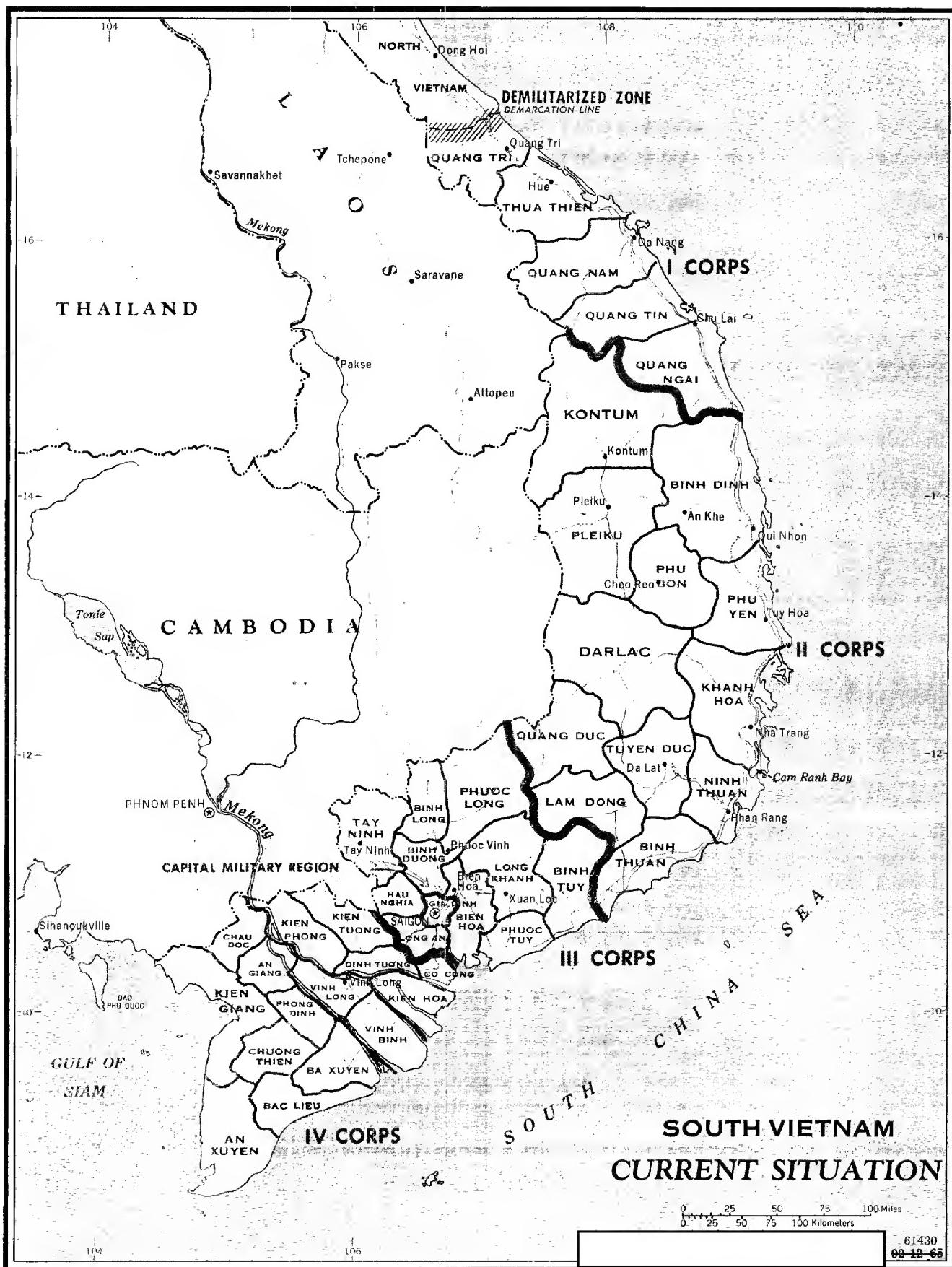
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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

The Military Situation in South Vietnam: There have been no reports during the past 24 hours of significant contact with the Viet Cong in major allied operations now under way in South Vietnam.

A South Vietnamese Army battalion yesterday initiated another two-day sweep operation in the demilitarized zone--the second such venture within the past week. The first government operation in the demilitarized zone yielded no significant results, although Viet Cong units are suspected of using the area as a safe haven. US military advisers are not accompanying the South Vietnamese force.

On 7 March, a Viet Cong force attacked an outpost in Long An Province about ten miles southwest of Saigon, inflicting government losses of 16 killed, 9 wounded, 11 missing, and 25 weapons. Enemy casualties are unknown.

Other enemy activity on 7 March included an estimated battalion-size attack on a government company in Bien Hoa Province and the attempted ambush of a paramilitary unit in Pleiku Province. Enemy losses in these two actions were six killed and three captured; reports of government casualties have not yet been received.

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Military Developments in North Vietnam: An increase in the number of operational MIG-21 Fishbed jet fighters was disclosed in [redacted] photography of the airfields in the Hanoi area. The photography showed 15 Fishbeds on the runway at Phuc Yen, an increase of four or five since the last photography [redacted]

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Construction activity at the main airfields continues. At Phuc Yen, 49 large aircraft revetments have been completed and 12 temporary revetments have been constructed on the parking apron along the taxiway. At Kep airfield, 15 large revetments are complete and 12 more are under construction. Four temporary revetments have been built on the parking apron as well. A runway extension effort is under way at Hanoi/Gia Lam airfield, which has two runways, one 7,400 feet and the other 5,800 feet. No measurements on the extension are presently available.

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***Guatemala: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)**

The electoral tribunal yesterday resumed publishing returns from Sunday's voting after withholding them for almost a full day.

With only 124 out of 324 districts yet to be recorded, the tribunal at 7:30 PM EST yesterday gave Mendez of the Revolutionary Party (PR) 190,822 votes to 142,586 for Aguilar of the government-backed Institutional Democratic Party (PID). Ponciano of the National Liberation Movement (MLN) trails with 100,404 votes.

As the margin between the two leaders closes, it becomes evident that no candidate is likely to achieve a majority. The padding of returns may have begun in earnest and Aguilar will probably close the gap significantly before the tally is ended. Mendez, in a press interview yesterday, angrily warned that if fraud were proven he would call his followers into the streets.

In the congressional races, the embassy--on the basis of present incomplete returns--estimates that the PR may have been victorious in 24 contests to the PID's 18 and the MLN's seven. Of six additional seats, the PR may win four, thus giving it a bare majority out of 55 seats. [If any party fails to gain a clear majority in the congress, it will have to bargain with one of the others over the formation of a new government.]

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Indonesia: [President Sukarno is planning new initiatives in the face of continuing antigovernment agitation.]

[Sukarno has called for meetings with political party leaders, cabinet ministers, and regional military commanders on 10, 11, and 12 March, respectively. He apparently will use the meetings to accelerate the formation of a "Sukarno Front" and to press for a ban on all anti-Communist groups engaged in the recent demonstrations.]

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[Large-scale demonstrations against Subandrio and other cabinet leftists continue in Djakarta. The agitators are members of the anti-Communist High School Action Command, who took to the streets following Sukarno's recent ban on demonstrations by university students. The degree of army support for the students remains unclear.]

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NATO-France: [Most NATO governments have indicated their intention to support the integrated NATO military structure after France withdraws.]

[Preliminary reactions have been received from all NATO countries, except Portugal, to President de Gaulle's decision to announce formally his plans to withdraw from the integrated NATO commands and require new bilateral negotiations on the stationing of foreign troops in France. There was general agreement that, once De Gaulle acted, a prompt co-ordinated reply should be made in support of NATO. However, several countries cautioned against hasty actions which would rally French support for De Gaulle.]

[The Hague, Luxembourg, and Oslo stressed the fears of the smaller European nations that the French action would enhance the position of the Germans in the alliance and lead them to demand a more independent military position.]

[German officials point out that the French initiative may bring into question existing multilateral arrangements under which all German forces are committed to NATO. They assert, however, that Germany would not seek to exploit such an opening since it has no desire for a national army. On the other hand, Bonn apparently does want French troops to remain in West Germany but anticipates prolonged and difficult negotiations with the French over their future status and obligations.]

[The British have raised the possibility of calling a special ministerial-level conference to draft a strong declaration by the 14 in support of NATO. They have also proposed that a smaller planning group be established in Paris to coordinate the actions of the NATO members in their confrontation with the French. The British also caution against pulling out all NATO roots in France unless absolutely necessary.]

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[A number of other special problems face some of the smaller NATO members. The Canadians point out that they can not afford to weaken the Ottawa-Paris ties in any way that could strengthen the separatists in Quebec and their association with France. The Danish ambassador in Washington noted that the French action might revive interest in a Scandinavian defense alliance. The Norwegians noted that it would be more difficult for Norway to deal with left-wing proponents of a referendum on Norway's membership in NATO. Iceland faces a similar problem as a parliamentary debate is scheduled today on a Communist Party proposal to establish a special committee to review Iceland's position in NATO.]

[The regular meeting of the North Atlantic Council, scheduled for today, has the French move as the only significant item on its agenda. The Germans and British have cautioned against any confrontation with the French at the meeting and suggest it might be postponed until an agreed position can be reached by the 14.]

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Panama: [President Robles may have altered his attitude concerning a possible US-Panamanian canal treaty.]

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[Robles has consistently maintained that his political future depends on negotiating a treaty.]

[Meanwhile, the head of the Panamanian negotiating team, Diogenes de la Rosa, is alleged by the press to have charged that Panama's proposal to triple canal tolls has been rejected by the US because present tolls constitute an "indirect subsidy" to the US Merchant Marine.]

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Albania: Factional differences within Albania's top leadership may have precipitated the decrees announced on 7 March strengthening party control of the armed forces.

One decree directs that effective immediately the political commissar system, abolished in 1955, shall be reintroduced in all military units, subunits, and institutions. Another decree abolishes as of 1 May the rank system in the armed forces, and probably also in the secret police. These moves, which were apparently endorsed at a central committee plenum on 4 March, could suggest that the loyalty of the army was in doubt.

The changes being effected are similar to steps taken in 1965 in the Chinese Communist armed forces to strengthen party control of the military.

[There have been earlier reports of factionalism in Tirana. Defense Minister Beqir Balluku, reportedly dissatisfied with the military aid received from Communist China, is said to have headed a faction which favors less isolation for Albania from the rest of the world.]

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NOTES

Uganda: [The political situation is still unsettled following Prime Minister Obote's recent assumption of supreme power. Obote retains control of the efficient and disciplined special force of police and probably has the backing of most of the factionalized army. However, opposition elements are incensed over his actions]

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Cyprus: [President Makarios is expected to announce a change in the command of the Cypriot armed forces that will reduce supreme commander General Grivas' role to that of a coordinator having no command authority. The change is likely to spark a strong reaction from Grivas' political supporters,

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[New] tensions may also arise as a result of the Cypriot Government's recent demand for the recall of an official of the Turkish Embassy on the grounds that he had played a leading part in underground activities.]

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